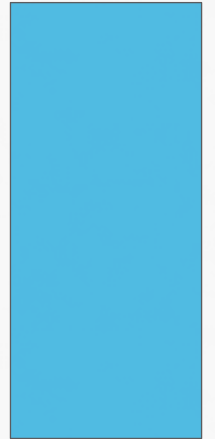




# **SOUTH DAKOTA GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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# TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- Graduation Requirements
- Local Decisions
- Frequently Asked Questions

# GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

## **4 units of Language Arts**

*must include:*

- Writing – 1.5 units
- Literature – 1.5 units (must include .5 unit of American Literature)
- Speech or Debate - .5 unit
- Language Arts elective - .5 unit

## **3 units of Math**

*must include:*

- Algebra I – 1 unit
- \*Algebra II – 1 unit
- \*Geometry – 1 unit

## **3 units of Lab Science**

*must include:*

- Biology – 1 unit
- Any Physical Science – 1 unit
- \*Chemistry or Physics – 1 unit

## **3 units of Social Science**

*must include:*

- U.S. History – 1 unit
- U.S. Government - .5 unit
- World History - .5 unit
- Geography - .5 unit

## **1 unit of the following**

*any combination:*

- Approved Career & Technical Education course
- Capstone Experience or Service Learning
- World Language

## **1 unit of ^Fine Arts**

## **$\frac{1}{2}$ unit of Personal Finance or Economics**

## **$\frac{1}{2}$ unit of Physical Education**

## **$\frac{1}{2}$ unit of Health or Health Integration**

# GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS



- **Math**

- May be excused from Algebra II or Geometry, but not both
- Must still take 3 units of Math

- **Lab Science**

- May be excused from Chemistry or Physics
  - Must still take 3 units of Lab Science
- Student & school must document the exclusion & file in student's permanent record



- **Fine Arts**

- District may offer credit for extracurricular Fine Arts activities
- A max of  $\frac{1}{4}$  credit may be granted for each activity in each school year
- Student may earn up to 1 credit in Fine Arts for participation in extracurricular activities



# LOCAL DECISIONS

NO DEPT. OF EDUCATION APPROVAL REQUIRED

# A SCHOOL HAS THE AUTHORITY TO:

- **Set grad requirements beyond 22-credit minimum**
- **Waive credits for out-of-state transfer students**
  - One or more grad requirements for senior students who transfer from another state may be waived if they are unable to meet the SD grad requirements because of time & scheduling restraints, but not due to course failure
- **Accept/not accept credits for a student who transferred from another school district**
- **Excuse limited English proficient students from taking required units of credit**
  - Student must be identified as limited English proficient as defined in SD Administrative Rule 24:42:08:01
  - Student's parent/guardian & school counselor/administrator must agree and document the excuse in the Language Acquisition Plan
  - Keep in mind the career & postsecondary goals of the student



# A SCHOOL HAS THE AUTHORITY TO:

- **Excuse a student from the required units of Algebra II or Geometry, and Chemistry or Physics**
  - Must still take 3 units of Math and Lab Science
  - Must be documented
- **Offer credit for Fine Arts extracurricular activities**
- **Dual Credit courses:**
  - Count/not count courses as core or elective towards graduation requirements
  - Determine how dual credit courses will equate into high school units of credit
  - Pay or leave as the responsibility of the student



# A SCHOOL HAS THE AUTHORITY TO:

- **Accept/not accept online course credits**
- **Determine whether a course meets the definition of a Lab Science course**
  - A “laboratory class” is defined as a course providing opportunities for students to interact directly with the material world, or with data drawn from the material world, using tools that are not found in a library, media center, student hall, or classroom, and in which students use safe and appropriate laboratory techniques, as well as implement data collection techniques, models and theories of science. (SD Administrative Rule 24:43:01)



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# QUESTION #1

**Can I count a course in more than one content area?**

No.

- Called “double dipping”
- Courses may not be counted more than once to fulfill high school graduation requirements

## QUESTION #2

**What if a student does not have Algebra I on his/her transcript, but has taken three units of Math?**

- The student **does not need to take Algebra I** if he/she has taken & passed math courses more advanced above Algebra I.
- The student **needs to take Algebra I** if he/she has not taken advanced math courses above Algebra I.

## QUESTION #3

**Can a student take  
Debate instead of  
Speech?**

Yes

- Requirements are for .5 unit of Speech or Debate

## QUESTION #4

**Do athletic activities  
count toward P.E.  
credit?**

No

- Extracurricular athletic activities cannot count as P.E. credit



## QUESTION #5

**Can high school credit be offered for middle school courses?**



***This may change.***

Yes

- Must complete a Waiver Application for High School Credit Before Grade Nine
- Students must complete an End-of-Course Exam

# QUESTION #5 (CONTINUED)

- Currently schools that have a waiver to allow them to teach a course for high school credit before grade 9 can award credit to any student in the course offered who passes a state created or state approved end-of-course exam. All districts offering credit before grade nine must be able to show that the teacher is highly qualified to teach at the high school level and must use the same standards used for high school content.
- A first reading of rules to change this process was presented at the August Board of Education meeting. Public comment on these rules will open in September and will be used to help the Board of Education determine at their November meeting whether or not to make changes. **If rule changes are passed, the districts would retain the local control to determine whether a student met the criteria for passing the course and receiving credit, provided the standards used are at least as rigorous as the standards used in high school. State created exams in many of the common course areas would continue to be available to any district that wanted to utilize them, but would not be required.** Nothing in the proposed rules would prohibit a local district from creating and using their own exams.
- If rules are not passed, the current process would remain intact, and students will still need to pass a state approved exam to receive credit for courses taken before grade 9.
- Nothing in the proposed rules would change the credit-by-exam program, which is used in cases where students who have never taken the course attempt to “test out” for credit. In those cases, students who have never entered the classroom take an exam without taking the actual course to show they have mastered the content and should receive transcribed credit. This is often used by students who are transitioning from homeschool settings to public school settings to show competency in a subject.

## QUESTION #6

**Does an IEP overrule the graduation requirements?**

Yes

- IEP team has authority to modify specific grad requirements
- Take into consideration the student's career & postsecondary goals

# For more information on High School Graduation Requirements:

**Visit the web site:**

<http://doe.sd.gov/octe/gradrequirements.aspx>

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